



My constituents come in all shapes and sizes, like this snake from the Beardsley Zoo. Fortunately, Zoo Director Gregg Dancho was handling this reptile during Bridgeport Day at the State Capitol—a day when our city has a chance to promote itself to the legislature.

Aid For Our Towns

A very important part of my job representing the people of the 23rd state Senate District is ensuring Bridgeport and Stratford receive their fair share of state funding. I am pleased to report the following grants and reimbursements from the state in Fiscal Year 2008–2009:

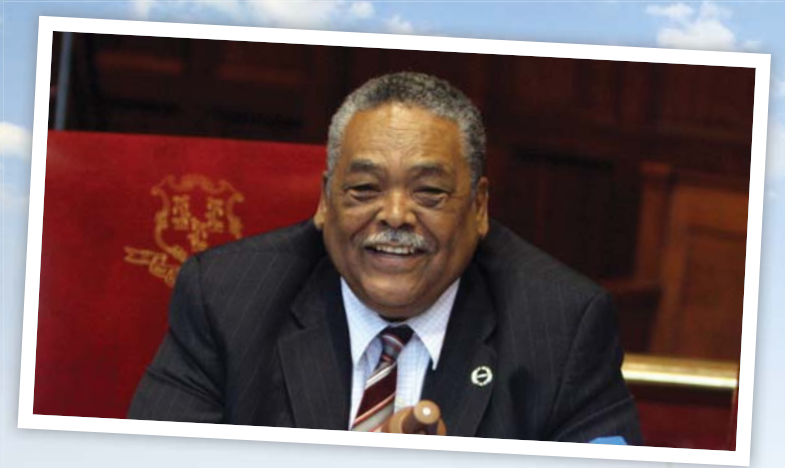
	Fiscal Year 08-09
Total Education Grants	\$189,886,841
Town Aid Road Fund Grant	\$968,605
Mashantucket Pequot & Mohegan Fund Grant	\$9,824,340
Local Capital Improvement Program (LoCIP)	\$2,512,434
Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT)	\$14,193,195
Total	\$217,385,415

Gang Violence Prevention

In April I attended a meeting in Norwalk with municipal and police officials, FBI and Justice Department representatives, and Congressman Chris Shays to discuss the problem of gang violence, and how gangs and their influence do not stop at town borders. Gangs have a long history in Bridgeport—a history of violence. By working with federal agencies like the Justice Department and the Drug Enforcement Administration, we can defeat these gangs, reduce crime in our community, and make Bridgeport and Stratford more attractive places to do business. This will increase our property tax base, which leads to more revenue for priorities like public education and public safety. While most of my legislative work is focused on the General Assembly, I am always mindful of meeting with regional and federal officials to talk about issues of common concern and to learn about new programs and funding sources that are available to move the communities of Bridgeport and Stratford into a better future.

AIDS Awareness

In April I was proud to take part in AIDS Awareness Day at the State Capitol, when student groups and adults rallied to promote more AIDS awareness in our public schools. It’s an especially important topic for Bridgeport. Since 1980, Bridgeport has ranked third in the state (behind Hartford and New Haven) in the total number of AIDS and HIV cases. In the past 27 years we’ve had 1,343 people living with AIDS in Bridgeport—about 1 out of every 8 people living with AIDS in Connecticut. I mention these statistics because AIDS cases in young people are growing, and we need to be vigilant in instructing our teenagers about how to prevent catching this often deadly disease.




Dear Neighbor:

By almost any measure, the nation is in a recession, and states across America are feeling the effects.

Connecticut faces these uncertain times with a biennial budget that makes important investments in local schools, roads, health care, school readiness, municipal aid, criminal justice programs, and other vital needs.


However, state revenue forecasts continue to drop, and just as Connecticut’s families are tightening their belts, so must our state government. While we held the line on any new spending during this past legislative session, we were still able to find ways to help the people of our state by enacting long-needed reforms in our criminal justice system, health care, consumer protection, and the environment.

As always, I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Edwin Gomes
State Senator

Fighting the High Cost of Gasoline & Energy

We all know that the cost of fuel is sky-high—affecting how much you pay for gas and groceries. While we can’t stop fuel prices from rising, we can prevent tax increases from further driving up the cost. This June, we said NO to a scheduled increase in the gross receipts tax. By blocking this tax hike, we’re hoping to save you a few cents on each gallon, and that adds up. We’re also taking action to help seniors and working families survive the high cost of the looming home heating oil season.



State Senator Edwin Gomes

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I’m proud to
represent the
23rd Senate District:
Bridgeport
Stratford

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State Senator
EDWIN GOMES
23RD DISTRICT



LEGISLATIVE INITIATIVES

Protecting Homeowners & Our Economy

This year, I supported comprehensive legislation designed to keep families in their homes and proactively protect our state's economy from the national subprime mortgage crisis. Across the country, quality of life is being diminished, home values are plummeting, and families are faced with difficult choices as home foreclosure rates have skyrocketed 75 percent since 2006.



About 71,000 Connecticut mortgages are adjustable-rate, high-interest subprime mortgages, and 21,000 of those will reset to a higher rate in the next 12 months.

The legislation we passed created a special loan program which allows the Connecticut Housing Finance Authority (CHFA) to purchase home loans from lenders and place eligible borrowers on affordable payment schedules for 30-year fixed-rate mortgages. We also re-initiated the state's Emergency Mortgage Assistance Program and gave CHFA the authority to purchase foreclosed homes to create affordable and supportive housing. These programs will help thousands of Connecticut families and will help prevent the mass foreclosures other states have experienced over the past year.

Additionally, we created a foreclosure mediation program for lenders and borrowers, established a mortgage crisis job training team, and created new restrictions and licensing requirements for mortgage lenders and brokers to prevent predatory lending practices in the future. All these initiatives were created without increasing state spending.

TO RECEIVE MORE INFORMATION on any of the following issues, fill out this coupon and mail it to me, e-mail or call my office. Make sure to give your name and mailing address and indicate which issues you're interested in. My contact information is on the opposite side of this mailer.

- | | | | |
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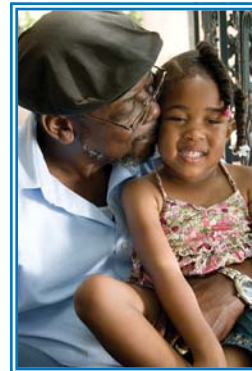
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Health Care Costs for Municipalities & Small Businesses

This legislative session we tried to tackle one of the biggest issues driving up our property taxes—health care costs for our cities and towns. The Connecticut Healthcare Partnership would allow municipalities, small businesses and nonprofits to voluntarily join the state employee health insurance plan. By expanding this large pool of insured, we would increase bargaining power and lower costs for municipalities. Not only would this benefit property tax payers, but it would also benefit small businesses—they create the vast majority of jobs in Connecticut, but are hit the hardest when it comes to skyrocketing health care costs. Unfortunately, the governor vetoed this bill.

Grandparents and Relative Caregivers

For more than 52,000 Connecticut children, family life means living in households led by grandparents or other relatives instead of biological parents. In recognition of that trend, we passed a new law—unanimous in the House and Senate—to help more eligible caregivers receive state assistance. We recognize that it is preferable and healthier for children to be raised in the stable surroundings these households



provide, especially after a nuclear family breaks up. Current law allows a Probate Court to qualify next-generation caregivers for one-time grants for such things as a bed, a winter coat or even summer camp. The new law grants the state Superior Court authority to make these extended families eligible for similar expenses.

Correcting Health Care Disparities

As a basic human right, all Connecticut residents should have equal access to the highest quality health care services available. However, research and experience have shown that many people encounter barriers to quality health care based on race, ethnicity, national origin and linguistic ability. I supported the creation of a Commission on Health Equity that will work to identify



the causes of disparities in our health care system and eliminate them. The commission will also work to improve the health of all Connecticut residents and will report back to the legislature with recommendations by June 1, 2010.



Raising the Minimum Wage

During these tough economic times we took positive action to help working families across Connecticut. The General Assembly passed legislation to increase the state minimum hourly wage from \$7.65 to \$8.00 beginning January 1, 2009 and to \$8.25 beginning January 1, 2010. While the governor vetoed this bill—which would have benefited nearly 65,000 low-income workers in our state and provided them with some financial relief from the rising cost of living—at the time of this writing, the legislature is contemplating a veto override.

Veterans' Benefits

We continue to recognize the sacrifices made by veterans and military personnel from Connecticut and their families. The General Assembly approved a bill to enhance unemployment benefits for spouses if they voluntarily leave their jobs because their military spouse has been relocated. Legislation was also approved to provide additional educational opportunities for certain veterans and their families. One measure requires the state-run institutions of higher education to offer tuition waivers for any state resident who is a dependent or surviving spouse of an active-duty military member who was killed in action after September 11, 2001. In addition, the tuition waiver for veterans will be expanded to include graduate school tuition for National Guard members beginning July 1, 2008.



HELPING WORKERS SAVE FOR RETIREMENT

Saving for retirement is getting more difficult. People who work for small businesses have it especially tough—nearly 70 percent of small businesses don't offer retirement plans. I supported a bill to create a retirement plan for small business employees, non-profits, and the self-employed. The plan would have been voluntary. By pooling together small businesses from across Connecticut, the plan would have increased bargaining power, helped people save for retirement, and instantly given our small businesses a real advantage over out-of-state competitors. While this bill only passed the Senate this year, I hope it will be signed into law next year.

